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## **San José Mayor Proposes Ordinance to Reduce Public Cost of Gun Violence, Fund Efforts to Combat Gun Violence**

*Mayor of America's 10th largest city seeking a first-of-its-kind "harm reduction" model to combat gun violence, by mandating Gun Liability Insurance and exploring a gun violence fee.*

*San Jose, Calif.* – Today, Mayor Sam Liccardo proposed a city ordinance that would require all firearm owners in San José to carry liability insurance for their weapons, the first such requirement in the nation. Those gun owners unable to purchase liability insurance could pay a fee to compensate taxpayers for the public costs of firearm violence in America's tenth largest city.

Two weeks after San José families lost two children in the recent Gilroy shooting, Mayor Liccardo observed that "A mayor doesn't have the luxury of just offering 'thoughts and prayers'—we have to solve problems. While this is far from a complete solution, it is something we can do to reduce the harms of firearms, without waiting for Congress to take action," said Mayor Liccardo.

"Under current Supreme Court rulings, the 2nd Amendment to the US Constitution protects the right to keep and bear arms. However, the Constitution does not require taxpayers to subsidize that individual choice. The cost of city police and emergency services required to address gun violence should be paid by gun owners, not all taxpayers," continued Mayor Liccardo.

Mayor Liccardo compared his approach to the successful "harm reduction" strategies that have helped dramatically lower smoking rates and deaths and injuries from automobile accidents.

"We require motorists to carry automobile insurance, and the insurance industry appropriately encourages and rewards safe driver behavior. We tax tobacco consumption both to discourage risky behavior and to make sure non-smokers are not forced to subsidize the substantial public health costs generated by smoking-related illnesses and deaths. These successful public health models inspire a similar "harm reduction" approach for firearms," Liccardo said.

"As Silicon Valley's largest city, if we prove up this innovative solution and scale it across other cities and states, the history of "harm reduction" efforts instructs that we can make a long-term impact," Liccardo added.

In addition to an insurance-or-fee mandate, Mayor Liccardo also proposed:

1. Imposing gun and ammunition sales taxes to help fund gun safety classes, gun violence prevention programs, and additional victim assistance services for survivors of gun violence,
2. Exploring a consent-to-search program for juveniles, which would allow parents to consent to have local law enforcement search a juvenile's person or their property,
3. Creating a program that would offer cash rewards to anyone who reports someone who possesses unlawfully-obtained guns or weapons.

The Mayor has based his design of penalties for noncompliance on California Vehicle Code Section 16209, which provides fines and other penalties for the misdemeanor of operating a vehicle without insurance.

Liccardo acknowledged that mandatory firearm insurance was just one of many steps required to protect his city from gun violence. "With this measure, we won't suddenly end gun violence. But we're going to stop paying for it," added Mayor Liccardo, referring to what he calls the "gun violence subsidy" paid by the public for individuals' gun ownership.

California Assemblymember David Chiu, a leading voice for sensible gun policy, added, "Since Trump and his Republican allies have abdicated their responsibility to address our country's gun violence crisis, cities and states must lead, and I applaud Mayor Liccardo and San Jose's bold leadership on this innovative solution."

If gun owners are unable to purchase private insurance for any reason, Liccardo's proposal offers the option of a fee in lieu of insurance paid for by firearm owners. Such a payment would need to be protected by the highest privacy standards, such as blockchain technology, to be compliant with California state law that precludes local governments from establishing gun registries.

"The privacy technology already exists to enforce compliance without creating a public registry," Liccardo noted.

Liccardo said he will reach out to his fellow mayors in California and throughout the nation to encourage them to pass similar legislation. "Just like restrictions against smoking in offices and restaurants started in cities and spread widely, we hope by this effort we can promote a national model of harm reduction to reduce gun violence," Liccardo concluded.

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